EXCURSIONS
2. Woolaway Woolshed, Saturday, June 2.

EXCURSION TO KANGAROO VALLEY

On Sunday, March 18, the excursion to Kangaroo Valley was well attended, with only two spare seats in the coach. A slightly hazy but otherwise delightful autumn day helped to display a countryside lush green after generous summer rains.

Following morning tea at Fitzroy Falls and the descent of Barren­garry Mountain, we were met by our guides Mrs. Doris Blinman and Mrs. Elsie Dewhurst. Our first inspection was of the Aboriginal axe-grinding stones near the foot of the mountain, followed by the Historic General Store (1880) where some of us had a trial sitting on a genuine Arnotts Saos chair. At the Woolaway Woolshed John Glassford explained how the original framework and roof of the shed (1901) had been transported from Uri Park near Darlington Point to re-create the shearing shed atmosphere in Kangaroo Valley. John did this so well that a booking has been made for a group from the I.H.S. to visit the woolshed for dinner and dance on Saturday, June 2.

Back in town we had lunch at the Museum, to which has been added since our previous visit, an 1850 farmhouse in slab and bark. After lunch we went to St. Joseph’s Church (1880), to the Rectory (1882) for afternoon tea and finally to the Church of the Good Shepherd (1872) which still uses its pipe organ dated 1879. The trip home via Cambewarra Mountain complemented a very pleasant day, the mountain scenery being at its best with tree-fern and red cedar.

OBITUARY: ALMOND THOMAS GRENFELL

The death occurred at Crookwell on 16th January last of Roy Grenfell (as he was always known to us), one of the stalwarts who set this Society up on such a sound foundation. Always gentle and cheerful in manner, a most agreeable companion, he held office as secretary or treasurer over goodness only knows how many years. Typically, he repeatedly declined nomination as president, because he was always an unobtrusive work-horse; no other term conveys the true strength and endurance of his contribution, and the modesty of his attitude.

But even that does not recall fully the true extent of Roy’s prime contribution, which is readily seen from year after year of old Bulletins and Annual Reports. Although they speak for themselves, they do not tell of the other founding work he performed over decades of slogging work in assembling and cataloguing records which might otherwise have been lost. It is fitting now to recall it in some detail.

Latterday members who see a thriving society with its outstanding Museum and valuable local collection housed in the City Library may be surprised to learn that for many years the Society did not possess an inch of space it could call its own. Our growing records were housed in boxes which moved from one office-bearer’s home to another in an existence which, whilst not precarious, was not at all
satisfactory, although it was the best that could be achieved in the circumstances. Then the day came when funds permitted the purchase of a good steel cabinet which was placed in a back room of the present president’s office, in those years, towards the end of the 1940s. With a key to the door, a small group led by the late Alec Fleming, the late Jock Gardiner-Garden, and Roy Grenfell, used to meet there week in, week out for year after year, identifying material and cataloguing it. Painstaking though their work was, it was always done in a spirit of laughter, true comradeship, and enjoyment of work which was of the highest importance. Indeed, this remarkable trio came to be known affectionately as the Back-room Boys; and of this well-matched team of work-horses none pulled his weight harder than Roy Grenfell. So he is to be remembered as a foundation member in every sense; a founding member indeed. It is true to say that the Society of today would never have been the same without him.

Advancing years demanded some relaxation from such labours, and he gradually withdrew from active work. He richly deserved the honour the Society then bestowed upon him — its highest — in creating him an Honorary Life Member. One may be sure that he saw the continuing strength of the Society with pleasurable interest and, one hopes, a measure of truly justifiable pride.

To his widow and family the Society tenders its sincere sympathy, in deep gratitude for his sterling part in laying and building upon the firmest and best of foundations.

—E.B.

Father O’Malley, writing from New Zealand, also sent a tribute, which reads in part:

“Gentlemanly to his fingertips, he (Roy) was a good envoy with visitors to the monthly meetings and with those, beyond the Illawarra, on the monthly excursions. During his years on the committee his advice was always valuable.”

ART GALLERY ACQUISITION — GUERARD’S “AMERICAN CREEK”

Any members who have not seen this painting at Wollongong Art Gallery are urged to do so. It is the original oil painting, dating from the early 1860s, which is better known as the lithograph in Eugene von Guerard’s work, which includes the landscape of Lake Illawarra. The artist visited our locality in 1859, and obviously found it an inspiration.

At about $60,000.00 the picture is a real bargain. It belongs here, and is now ours for all time, pursuant to the wise purchasing policy of buying art works having local significance. This acquisition is admirable, and the City Council and Gallery are to be congratulated on their far-sightedness in securing the picture before it went elsewhere. Worth every cent of the cost, it must increase in value, as indeed it already has. It is good art representative of a famous 19th century artist; it is good history; and its subject, an advancing swathe of clearing cutting into a primeval rain-forest, is a standing warning on the conservation of nature.

—EDGAR BEALE.